CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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CANADA

WORKING PAPER CONCERNING CD ACTION ON OUTER SPACE

Canada proposes that

- a CD Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space be established with the mandate to negotiate a convention for the non-weaponization of outer space.

BACKGROUND

- There are a number of limited international agreements that deal with outer space, most notably "The Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies". This Treaty is commonly referred to as the "Outer Space Treaty".

- Under Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, States Parties to the Treaty "undertake not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any kinds of weapons of mass destruction ... or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner."

- There is no current multilateral agreement banning the deployment of weapons other than weapons of mass destruction in outer space.

- There is thus a need for the international community to address this problem, and to do so multilaterally, particularly in view of the growing number of states with the capacity or near-capacity to place objects into orbit.

- We acknowledge that there is currently no arms race in outer space. We accept the current military uses of outer space for surveillance, intelligence-gathering and communications. Our focus is on the non-weaponization of outer space, i.e. no positioning of actual weapons in outer space.

- On verification of such a Treaty many useful ideas already exist, including work done in earlier CD Ad Hoc Committees on Outer Space. We welcome a realistic and early reappraisal of these basic concepts.

- Canada has called for the establishment of a CD Ad Hoc Committee with the mandate given above. We recognize that there remains a variety of views on the possible scope of such a Treaty. As an interim step towards full negotiations, we support the appointment of a CD Special Coordinator with an appropriate mandate to explore prospects for the early establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee with a negotiating mandate.